5. On the Exercise of Domination Through Cruelty

The man of your dreams cannot be a wimp who follows his woman wherever she commands. If a woman is not dominated by a man, she is dominated by her whims. Don't you prefer that I be the one to dominate you?

—Pubis Angelical, Puig

In the previous lecture, I cited Cesare Pavese. I presented, as an example of beautiful thought, a fragment from *The Business of Living*, also known as Pavese's *Diary*. The central idea of the quote was that of literature as a defense. Life places us in certain situations that harm us, and literature is capable of defending us by capturing those traumatic eventualities in literary works ("premeditated constructions") to warn us about them. Of course, not on a superficial level but on a profound one. It is not that *Don Quixote* warns us—just to give an example—about the dangers of becoming an anachronistic knight-errant, but rather that it speaks to us about the tragic dimension of idealism. By "tragic", I refer to the fate of the tragic hero, who inevitably moves toward death or ostracism. *Don Quixote* also presents us with the power of ideals and the incomprehension faced by anyone who tries to impose outdated values on a decadent reality. And that could indeed happen to us! None of these ideas seem foreign or hidden to us anymore; it is not necessary to read Unamuno to understand this sense in *Don Quixote*. That is why the Quixotic journey constitutes an excellent example of how the dialogue between literature and life functions.

I then said that we could perfectly replace "literature" with "art". And while I recognize that not all art creates some form of awareness about reality (much art is mere entertainment), there are also artistic expressions that denounce and foresee various aspects of reality on a deep level. Not necessarily political, as Sartre wanted, but it is not necessary to engage in politics to engage in dialogue with life. Political text is just one of many forms of denunciation. This is the moment in which I avoid the old discussion about the impossibility of escaping politics, which we have read primarily in Foucault but which Marx had already taught us.

One step beyond all this foliage lies what we have called "philosophy". Not all philosophy. Much philosophy is that very foliage. Perhaps only a small sector of philosophy and thought, but a very valuable one, is not. What do literature, art, and philosophy have in common? First and foremost, their undeniable human character. For another species—at least for another terrestrial species—literature, art in general, and philosophy are unimaginable things.

Thus, truthfully, it is the manifestation of a human capacity and a special use of intelligence. This capacity, combined with that of writing, makes the capture of certain orders not only possible but radically necessary and "human". It is then intelligence pulsing inside all these activities like an abstract heart, breathing life into every construction.

Thinking separates us from animals, but our animal nature always threatens to resurface.

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We are not only animals, but we are animals. It is natural, then, that we are territorial. "Territoriality" is the competition to acquire and preserve resources. Territoriality is the defense of territory, which is the same as fighting to safeguard our sources of resources.

The ability to dispose of resources at will is the reason why territory is desirable to us. Therefore, power is the capacity to exercise will. When we can exercise our will over something or someone, we dominate it. When something or someone exercises their will over us, we are dominated. In human relationships, there will certainly be alternations, but here we must resort to a somewhat vague notion that is nonetheless of substantial utility. We can speak of the "statistically recurrent exercise of A's will over B" to define A as the "dominant" and B as the "dominated". That is, if in a given series of situations, A's

will is historically and predominantly the one that determines the final decision of the A/B pair, A is the dominant and B the dominated.

Domination and territoriality are common to both humans and animals, but abstract thought is a characteristic unique to humans. Abstract thought denounces the animal nature of other behaviors and, therefore, prevents us from either exercising or suffering instinctive, reflexive, and unthinking actions. In the face of these behavioral determinants, animals cannot mount any defense; they are their instinct. But we have the ability to choose. Elevated, abstract thought is our guarantee and safeguard against animality.

Writing this text, for example, makes me less of an animal.

Human beings are part of the natural order and are governed by the same needs as other living beings. But animal territoriality infiltrates our actions, and we exercise domination even when we intend to think. We compete and use violence (physical or symbolic) to obtain and preserve resources. It is inevitable. It is fatal. The superimposition of complex structures does not entirely erase the primitive nature of competitive impulses for resources.

The eternal and regulating principle of the universe is balance. Recognizing the impossibility of symmetrical power relations, one might assume that this fact means imbalance, but it is not so. Balance always finds a way to re-emerge and impose itself, even in situations that might seem less conducive to it. The extremes of the dominance relation—the dominant and the dominated—are necessarily locked into their roles. This necessity is nothing other than the need for joint decision-making in a bivoluntary unit that will statistically distribute power in a regular and asymmetric manner. Since power cannot simply vanish and decisions must be made not only when an individual's fate is at stake but when two fates are simultaneously defined, there can be no power left unexercised; decision-making cannot be left to chance. To prevent power from being wasted, asymmetry must exist, ensuring balance between necessarily different parts. The one who cedes power in a pair will be met by the universe with someone seeking to hold it. The one seeking to hold power will find one who will cede it.

Power is always distributed. The distribution of power is inevitable because reality always organizes itself, always balancing its parts in equilibrium; one who cedes power creates someone with more power, balancing the relationship asymmetrically, because power is not wasted—it is only taken or given. If someone occupies the dominant position by taking power, they leave the other party with only two alternatives: either not accept and enter into conflict (with the latent possibility of the relationship collapsing), or accept the available position and become dominated, taking the little power they are allowed to take. Hence, a dominant always needs a dominated, and a dominated always needs a dominant (or a strong will imposed on them).

Family, work, love, business, sexual, friendship relationships, and in fact, all types of human relationships are governed by this asymmetry of power that operates within the syntax of the "dominance relationship".

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I will call "hostage" a value within the syntax of the "dominance relationship". The hostage does not have to be a person—it can be anything. Even the very relationship between two parties. Extortion occurs through the hostage. Of course, when the hostage is the relationship itself, those benefits the dominated party gains from the relationship are also held hostage, since the condition of being a hostage, "hostage-hood", tends to be extensible.

If any entity were interested in safeguarding the existence of another, the condition of hostage would extend from the second to the first, such that both would be trapped within the same structure of

dependence. One by direct threat and the other by its interest in preserving the first. Hence, the manifestation of interest is always dangerous because it reveals exploitable vulnerabilities against the one who shows them.

If I don't want something bad to happen to my child, I too am a hostage of the kidnappers, because my will is entirely subjected to that of the kidnappers. If I don't want a relationship to end, I too am a hostage of the one who threatens it, as I transform by extension into a hostage.

The survival or death of the hostage is of great importance to the dominated but not to the dominant. For the dominant, it matters only to the extent that it allows them to dominate another, but they must manifest total indifference. If the hostage were to die, the dominant could continue their life without problems. But if the hostage were to die, the dominated would suffer greatly from the consequences of their loss.

The dominant operates within the realm of possibility, hinting at loss and its consequences. The fear of the dominated is their weapon.

Showing interest in the hostage is showing weakness. The only real way to dethrone the dominant is by becoming indifferent to the fate of the hostage. As long as the dominated party shows interest in the survival and well-being of the hostage (through consensual submission rituals or "attitudes of submission"), they will do nothing but perpetuate the dominance relationship they are immersed in and their position as dominated.

The behavior of one who does not wish to occupy the position of the dominated must contain a tacit threat of the extinction of the hostage. A prudent distance, a constant reserve regarding the need to preserve the existence of the hostage; in short, both tacit and explicit gestural demonstrations of the ability to be implacable, devoid of feelings, make it clear to the dominated their place in the relationship—that is, the distribution of roles, the distribution of power. The dominated thus loses control over their life.

Manifestations of attention, interest, and desire (gifts, invitations, gestures of affection) are all submission rituals, symptoms of weakness; attitudes of submission. The only way to enter into a relationship and not do so as a dominated is as a required (saying "yes" or "no" to the establishment of the relationship) and leaving space for the requester to act and commit alone; to entangle themselves in their own need, idealizing, altering reality to accommodate their desires. If this does not happen, the dominant should not care. If they care, it should only be "inwardly", never showing interest. The externalization of weakness inevitably leads to submission in this "machine reality", relentless and amoral.

The happiness of the dominant will always be restricted, and the unhappiness of the dominated, certain. The dominant will eventually lose interest. There is no challenge in constantly dominating.

The dominated will live each moment of the relationship with intensity – that will be their happiness, though precarious because they will likely imagine their condemnation – but they will also suffer intensely from the breakup, since the relationship itself is hostage, and upon its extinction, all the benefits they derived from their permanence (the other hostages) will disappear.

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The dominant finds themselves in a paradoxical situation. In a balanced universe like ours, everything "is paid for", everything "is balanced". That being the case, the paradox of the dominant is that they must "pay" to balance the power granted to them with a fatal condemnation. The dominant's condemnation is a solitary fate; in company or in real solitude. The dominant will never feel that their counterpart is in equilibrium with them because, inevitably, they will place themselves "above" the other, transforming them into the dominated. That's why a dominant can never be satisfied. If they choose to

be accompanied by a slave, they will become bored, tire, and lose interest. If they choose to be accompanied by a strong-willed person, they will inevitably head toward conflict, because they will attempt to subjugate them, which will be unacceptable to the strong-willed person. The tension will increase until collapse occurs (places open up, they are abandoned, and the syntax returns to being a pure abstraction). If they maintain the relationship, they will have to reconcile with themselves, creating a double consciousness guided by resentment and lies. This inevitably leads to solitude within the relationship itself. If they choose conflict with a strong-willed person and preserve the structure, the path will become a constant battle. Both will want to make decisions and will occasionally have to yield; this will also lead to resentment and the creation of double consciousness. Here, "double consciousness" simply means building an ideal situation for the other person, lying. Thinking something different from what is outwardly manifested daily. This attitude leads to a relationship potentially ending, because it has never really been a true commitment, or if it was, it no longer exists. This is nothing more than a form of dishonesty.

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The dominated may derive more benefit from the relationship. Or, as I like to say: "live it with greater intensity". But they will always know they are under threat. They will know that the relationship will not last, that it will end when the dominant tires of abusing them and leaves. Then, they have the condemnation of loss and its memory, from which they may never recover and will likely gloss over in extremely creative ways. Emotional pain is a way of living life with intensity, something that a dominant can hardly experience, because either naturally or by self-imposition, they won't let their feelings overwhelm them. They will live hiding their monstrous condition and judging how exaggerated some people are in their emotions.

The fatality of domination is a property of the power asymmetry in a pair. Notice that I don't say that relationships between pairs could be asymmetric; I say they will always be. It is fatal that they be so. That asymmetry is a direct and proportional reflection of the asymmetry of interest, which is also undeniable. And though at first glance it may seem paradoxical, that asymmetry maintains the balance that characterizes the universe we inhabit and are: for someone with little power, someone with a lot of power; for someone with a lot of power, someone with little power.

The reason things are this way is that two people with power over the relationship destroy the relationship. And two people without power over the relationship simply wouldn't have a reason to be connected.

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The provider (dominant) is the one who provides access to something – any value – to the provided (dominated). The provider uses this advantage to subjugate the provided. The fewer options the dominated has to obtain providers, the more they will suffer under the occasional provider. They are a wretched beggar.

The provider, in turn, will feel more comfortable in their position the more they know there is no competition. Or if there is, they will have to compete until it reaches violence.

The provided must remain needy (unsatisfied, insecure). The dominant will repeatedly (in veiled and extremely creative ways) show that they can break the relationship at any time without issue. Undoubtedly, this attitude stems from knowing they are the provider.

Anyone who seeks the love of a particular person and strives for that person automatically submits to their whims and defects. Anyone who "falls in love" (becomes obsessed with a particular person) will inevitably lose. But paradoxically, they gain, because they experience absolute love, complete surrender,

and total trust. While the dominant only experiences a reflected, trivial, instrumental experience; therefore, they are the real losers because domination is solitude.

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The attitudes of domination are what make visible the level of power the dominant has reached. The dominated is permissive, indulgent. They metaphorically have their eyes on the preservation of the hostage, not on dominating the other. They may even be completely unaware of what's going on behind the scenes. Or they may enjoy their domination. This is entirely possible.

Striking the other's self-worth (the "ego") is a way of teaching them to submit. It is vulgar and petty, but common and effective. And comfortable. It's countered with a simple: "and what about you? Who are you to judge me?"

But speaking like this is only possible for the dominant. Responding in this way implies going into a conflict that may lead to collapse, and the dominated cannot do that because they are taking care of the hostage, that is, the bond itself and its resources.

Dominant attitudes can be detected. The dominant will try to ensure that their dominating attitudes remain below the threshold of perception of the dominated so that the latter does not notice that a dominant attitude has occurred. It is also possible that they play with their indulgence.

Once a dominant attitude is detected, the dominated person is left with two paths: indulgence or conflict. Dialogue will only lead to a negotiation, which will either result in submission or imposition; that is, it will confirm indulgence or lead to conflict.

I cannot omit in this section the crucial test of dominance that I call the "tug". I call it that because it reminds me of a fisherman who has his hook in the water and, suddenly, feels that the fish has bitten. If they pull too hard, they might break the fish's mouth and be left with nothing. If they don't pull hard enough, the fish might slip off the hook. The tug is a peculiar ritual act of dominance that consists of testing the level of dominance held, advancing aggressively upon the will of the dominated. It can be a direct threat of rupture or the imposition of an extreme rule.

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In contrast to dominant attitudes, there are submissive attitudes. Telling someone something—for example—is presenting them with something we have known or seen, something that has happened to us, something we have done or plan to do. Narrating oneself is, therefore, granting power, submitting oneself to the test of their judgment; it is an attitude of submission. Hence, my repeated criticism of the work of psychologists. By narrating ourselves, we implicitly tell them (with the mere gesture) that their judgment is important and that we will take it into account to guide our behavior.

The examination that someone who narrates themselves is subjected to can only end in pass or fail. The problem is not how they fare, but the very gesture of submitting to the test and allowing another to influence their behavior, as if they lacked the completeness that they seek in that other opinionator. It is pure weakness, submission, a pathetic need for approval.

Whoever demands that someone enter a relationship (let us recall that places in syntax are simultaneously occupied, and there will be no dominant without the dominated, nor dominated without the dominant) is the requester. Whoever receives the request for a relationship and decides whether to enter it or not is the one being requested. The request is an attitude of submission. In requesting, the requester places the one being requested in a position of superiority because it gives them the opportunity to choose and pass judgment on the appropriateness of the requester. It is equivalent to saying to the dominant: "judge me".

Another attitude of submission is indulgence. Being indulgent is forgiving, but also allowing. In this case, forgiving and allowing certain offenses that lie between being offensive and not being offensive; which can be interpreted as such or not. These offenses are sometimes veiled, subtle; sometimes symbolic. Others are direct, grotesque. We become indulgent when we decide not to react, not to penalize, and in that process of growing abandonment of ourselves, we become increasingly permissive, thus granting power to someone or something. That failure to react in time positions us as dominated by that someone or something. We slowly give ground, and at some point, we realize there is no turning back; we are slaves to something we have created through our indulgent passivity. We have fallen into a spiral of indulgence that has completely deteriorated our image and thrown us into submission.

When we submit to dominance, we exhibit signs of weakness. A dominant will not forgive us for being weak. A vice or another dependency (emotional, economic, sexual) is a sign of weakness and will be relentlessly punished by the dominant. The dominant is satisfied by punishing the weakness in the same way that it happens in the rest of nature. The pieces settle mechanically in place, in balance, and power and parts of the syntax of domination are ultimately distributed; the state fossilizes and is the way it survives. It is like distributing the script of a play. Since there is no need for improvisation but to follow it, participants have certainties. The dominated must secretly accumulate resentment, and that resentment might explode at some point: it will create double consciousness (that is, veiled violence) or exercise frontal violence, either verbally or physically.

So, double consciousness appears both in the dominant and the dominated. In the former, as a strategy to eliminate commitment; in the latter, as a residue of dignity and the possibility of revenge.

Let us imagine a soccer team that, by contract, must enter the field losing three to zero. When interviewed after each match, the players are asked what they think about entering the field with a losing score every time they play. The players answer with a sad smile: "We play, that's what's important". This is the submission of overvaluation of the state; "I am so little that just being here is an achievement".

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As has been said, the requester is the one who requires the establishment of a peer relationship.

When a company asks people to apply for a position, it is the demander in the company/employee pair, but it has so many options to choose from that its judgment prevails, and it does not lose control of the situation. If the employee is not suitable (e.g., they are late, don't do their job well, or don't attend regularly), the company can fire them and look for someone else. With an abundant labor force available, the demand for work will make the company more selective. This means that the demand for labor will affect the supply. Each applicant is also a demander because they need the job (or rather, the economic compensation that comes with it) and know they have much competition. Therefore, they must demonstrate that they can serve the company better and more effectively than the other candidates. If two parties dominate each other by taking different hostages as a reference, then the one who cares more about their hostage will be the dominated because interest creates the dominated. If both parties are interested in a hostage, one must necessarily be more interested than the other, and it will not be able to threaten the relationship. In the company/employee pair, the pressure from a mass of candidates will reduce interest in each of them, making the company the dominant pole. If there were a specific task that only one employee knew how to perform and they did not urgently need the economic compensation, they could occupy the dominant position over the company. This clearly explains why unskilled labor is less compensated and sought after than skilled labor.

Women and Men

The structure described here refers to our current culture. Other cultures and times may or may not fit this description. The normal behavior of women and men in Asia, Africa, or among Eskimos or Aboriginal peoples surely varies. The same applies to their relationships in the Middle Ages or the 19th century. Although this clarification is trivial, some may believe that I am implying that the structures I describe are valid in all times and places.

But I am not interested in doing anthropology.

Here and now, generally, women compete among themselves for fewer men but with more resources. This naturally makes them more materialistic and strategically relentless when evaluating a partner. It also creates a certain profile of thought that allows them to end relationships without much emotional consequence (cruelty). This, in turn, may provoke violent reactions from men who are unwilling to be abandoned and who lack the moral mechanisms that a healthy society should have instilled in them. As an exercise of imagination, invert the following statement: "Julián has finally gotten a good job. Now he can get married." Does it not seem odd: "Julia has finally gotten a good job. Now she can get married"? Or: "Antonio lost his job, so his wife left him," with "Ana lost her job, so her husband left her." In our society, it seems absurd that a woman would be abandoned for losing her job, but not the other way around. The deep reasons for this behavior are not the focus of this analysis.

It is easier to be indifferent when one has enough survival capital or demand for one's own capital. Whoever always says yes does not fill their "yes" with value. Their "yes" devalues. Whoever almost always says "no" values their "yeses". Losing them is negative for the other.

Dominance can only be exercised by the one who has backing capital. If you don't have backing capital, you don't exist in the medium, and if you exist, your existence will not be considered. It is pointless to insist. You must protect your ego. Your self-esteem. If you look (both metaphorically and literally) at the people who despise you, that is an attitude of submission. There is a directly proportional relationship between the pressure for interest in the backing capital of the hostage and the power of the dominant who possesses that capital and can negotiate it. That is why many women condemn explicit prostitution while practicing veiled, in fact, secret prostitution. The declared prostitute, with her work, relieves the pressure on male sexuality, having sex directly for an agreed payment without ambiguity. The expensive prostitute, the unannounced one, condemns her because she makes her lose power. This prostitute does not negotiate openly but establishes the relationship rules through rituals that indicate what she wants. It is expected that this attitude is the origin of a brutal double consciousness. That is why in our society, male masturbation is also condemned. Because it decreases interest and the willingness to make sacrifices. A man with sexual need is capable of any act of submission. He also suffers the same veiled, covert sanction: male homosexuality. In this sense, we could speak of a kind of "lockdown for heterosexual men". On one hand, nature pushes him to satisfy his sexual desire; on the other, he perceives the veiled or explicit penalty for homosexuality, masturbation (and pornography, which is merely a tool for masturbation), and prostitution. Therefore, he has no choice but to negotiate with heterosexual females on their terms: being a demander and, consequently, submissive. Like cattle to the slaughterhouse, he is led down a path with only one exit and ruthlessly spurred on by Mother Nature to move forward.

If this dynamic is necessary for the survival of a species, entities will adapt to the roles assigned by the syntax. It is nature dominating. To refuse is like asking a star not to shine, the wind not to blow, or the stomach not to ask for food. The universe, nature, and necessity are one and the same.

An entity will become needy (the heterosexual male), while the other will be patient, manipulative, and will cultivate the lure (the heterosexual female). The needy will look for ways to be admitted into the

trap (and still rejoice at being caught!). They may pretend indifference, but it will be merely a strategy for admission.

When faced with role proposals, we either specialize or assume the failure of specialization.

If we specialize in a role, we necessarily atrophy in others. Atrophy is the same price we must pay for specialization. This confirms the idea of a universe in balance.

If we cannot specialize, we accept the failure of specialization, and our energies are redistributed. Because they no longer need to be invested in the specialization process, which consumes much time and energy.

In the interaction between men and women, just like in other species such as birds, the male will specialize as a competent individual within the relationships of consumption and value acquisition. Legal or not. He is a hunter. Like it or not. That is nature.

The female will attract the male and judge his value based on his abilities to obtain economic returns and share them with her. She is the natural judge of the male's abilities, just as in many other species (I am thinking of those dancing birds or the poor penguins who guard pebbles as if they were eggs), placing her immediately and unquestionably in the dominant role. It is her way of hunting: the man hunts by pursuit; the female, by ambush.

We could clearly identify a lyric of submission, repeated endlessly in the songs that men dedicate to women. It is also present in soap operas and in poetry since its beginnings.

By specializing, the male becomes more and more interested in showcasing a well-being, real or not. This still signifies a brutal recognition of the woman's petty nature, unable to appreciate values beyond material and economic needs. Even when women declare that a man attracts them for his ability to demonstrate feelings and empathy, what they say in the background is that what attracts them is the possibility of making him do what they want because he constantly shows submission before them. When these gallant men receive their paycheck, they will give it to their wives; when vacation time comes, they will decide what to do; they will be the ones who dictate when to have a child and where to live. The common agreement for the woman is always a necessary lie to confirm her dominance. Double consciousness.

The female attempts to attract the male through her physical appearance, presented as a lure. The male, primitive and naïve, acts instinctively, like another animal. For the female, her primary lure is her appearance. Then, her sexual abilities. For the male, his primary lure is his economic abilities, then his appearance.

It is curious that some women reproach their husbands for a lack of imagination when they chose them for being workers and having a good economic status (in short, their ability to sell themselves in the job market). It is also curious that many men reproach their wives for a lack of intelligence or a recurring inclination toward frivolity when they chose them for their physical beauty. We should remember why we chose a partner when the time for reproaches comes.

Competition lies behind the entire problem of dominance. In fact, it is the very concept of dominance. The relationship of competition is exercised to gain territorial dominance: a man, a woman, a place, a job, a thing—these are territories. We compete for them like animals. Females with females, males with males; males with females, females with males. Gaining an advantage by any means necessary is the premise. Sexuality is just another tool, vulgar and biological.

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Whoever plays a game unaware of its rules is punished by the game with defeat. Every game is capable of punishing ignorance of its rules.

When any group adopts as a symbol of hate something, an idea, or a symbol, that emblem immediately transforms into a symbol of group cohesion. From that unity, the power of mutual support emerges. The emblem of hate is the most important idea for the group, more than its own ideals. Because ideals can only be tested in the face of the threat of the emblem of hate and will feed the group's resentment, which will serve as an anesthetic for reasoning and plunge the group members into a reflexive, comfortable inertial movement; in a piranha-like frenzy. "Let's hate!" is one of the most vulgar slogans. Because hating something is loving its opposite. And, above all, loving with others.

Victimization is the way we present ourselves to others as victims, trying to erase any trace of "victimariarization" (the term doesn't exist, but it should). Those who victimize themselves try to erase all traces of themselves as perpetrators and point to another as the perpetrator, thus dividing the world into two parts: "victims like me" and "perpetrators like them".

In an ideal world, one that we could create at our own will, dominance might not exist. But the world we live in is not that one. We cannot shape it to our will. It is imposed on us by a group dynamic over which we have no control.

That reality is ultimately intersubjective doesn't mean we can mold it as we please.

And in this real world, not ideal, domination inevitably takes place in every interaction between wills. Whether we like it or not, it is something that has always happened and will always happen. Instead of denying it or concealing it, we must objectify it, set it aside, to see it and study it. That is, so that reason can act upon it and help us bear it.

What is cruelty in this analytical context, in this analytical domain? Cruelty defines a peculiar way of acting, based on a total lack of empathy. When someone drowns newborn kittens in a bucket because no one will take responsibility for caring for and feeding them, and they will be a problem, they act in a strictly rational way. But (apart from spurious distinctions, such as whether it is instrumental rationality or of another type) their reason is far from any moral conditioning that would prevent their actions. That is, whether by will or not, they are capable of nullifying the moral judgment on what they do. And, of course, an external gaze is necessary, one that does not annul the moral reference values, to judge that there is cruelty. Our "kitten killer", even if they know they are one, will not call themselves that. They will not feel pity or guilt. An external gaze will recognize the cruelty. And this structure can be extrapolated, no matter how different, to other less trivial situations that contrast reason and morality (genocides, abortion, the death penalty, creation of weaponry for war, among others).

Cruelty can only be exercised from a dead heart. From a cold, desensitized, indifferent personality, for which it is possible to behave like an implacable machine. There must be no interest in the other to exercise cruelty upon them. Therefore, it is characteristic of a petty person, strictly focused on purposes that have little or nothing to do with the true valuation of the other.

Between dominant and dominated, only the dominant is capable of being cruel, because they can play with the dominated at will. The constant threat of rupture that characterizes the dominant is cruelty. And it is so because they hold the will of the other.

The one who is cruel because they possess the advantage of holding another under threat, as they threaten the symbolic hostage, is worth nothing as a person and should not even be considered as such. They are merely a shell of a human being walking through the world, generating sadness and despair in those who are truly capable of feeling.

Given all I've said so far, it could be believed that I am accusing a sex or a gender – however you prefer – of cruelty. The truth is that cruelty has no gender, age, time, or culture. Domination neither. But the

reach of my statements should extend to an invitation to reflection. Let your own conscience tell you what is true in my discourse and what is not.

Finally, regarding the feminine will as the driver of the masculine will and the demand for submission from the male, consider the following excerpt from *The wanderer of the Stars* by Jack London:

> At times I think that the history of man is the history of love for woman. The memory of all my past that I now write is the memory of my love for woman. Always, in the ten thousand lives and forms I have had, I loved her. I love her now. My dream is filled with her presence; the fantasies of my waking moments, no matter where they begin, always guide me to her. It is impossible to escape her, her eternal, splendid, and dazzling figure as a woman.
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> Ah, do not be mistaken, reader. I am not a passionate and immature young man. I am a man of a certain age, with my body and health broken, close to death. I am a scientist and a philosopher. And, like all the generations of philosophers before me, I know woman for what she is: her weakness, her pettiness, her lack of modesty, her disloyalty, her feet rooted to the earth, her eyes that have never gazed upon the stars. Yet, there is something irrefutable and eternal: her feet are beautiful, her eyes radiant, her arms and her breasts are paradise, her charm surpasses all the wonders that have ever dazzled man; and, just as the magnet inevitably draws the metal, woman inevitably draws men.